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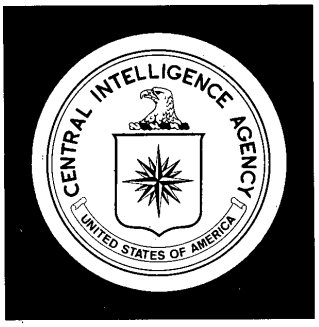

The President's Daily Brief

February 4, 1974

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

February 4, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

25X1

The Cambodian military situation is discussed on *Page 1.*

[redacted] 25X1

Foreign Minister Gromyko is said to be planning to visit Paris in mid-February in preparation for President Pompidou's trip to Moscow. *(Page 3)*

In Jordan, mutinous elements of an armored brigade stationed some 15 miles north of Amman returned to their barracks yesterday but are still threatening to march on the capital if their demands are not met. *(Page 4)*

President Sadat's dismissal of the managing editor of Al-Ahram probably is designed to muzzle the increasingly unruly journalist. *(Page 5)* 25X1

Notes on Venezuela, Brezhnev's departure from Cuba, [redacted] Soviet [redacted] 25X1 on *Page 6.*

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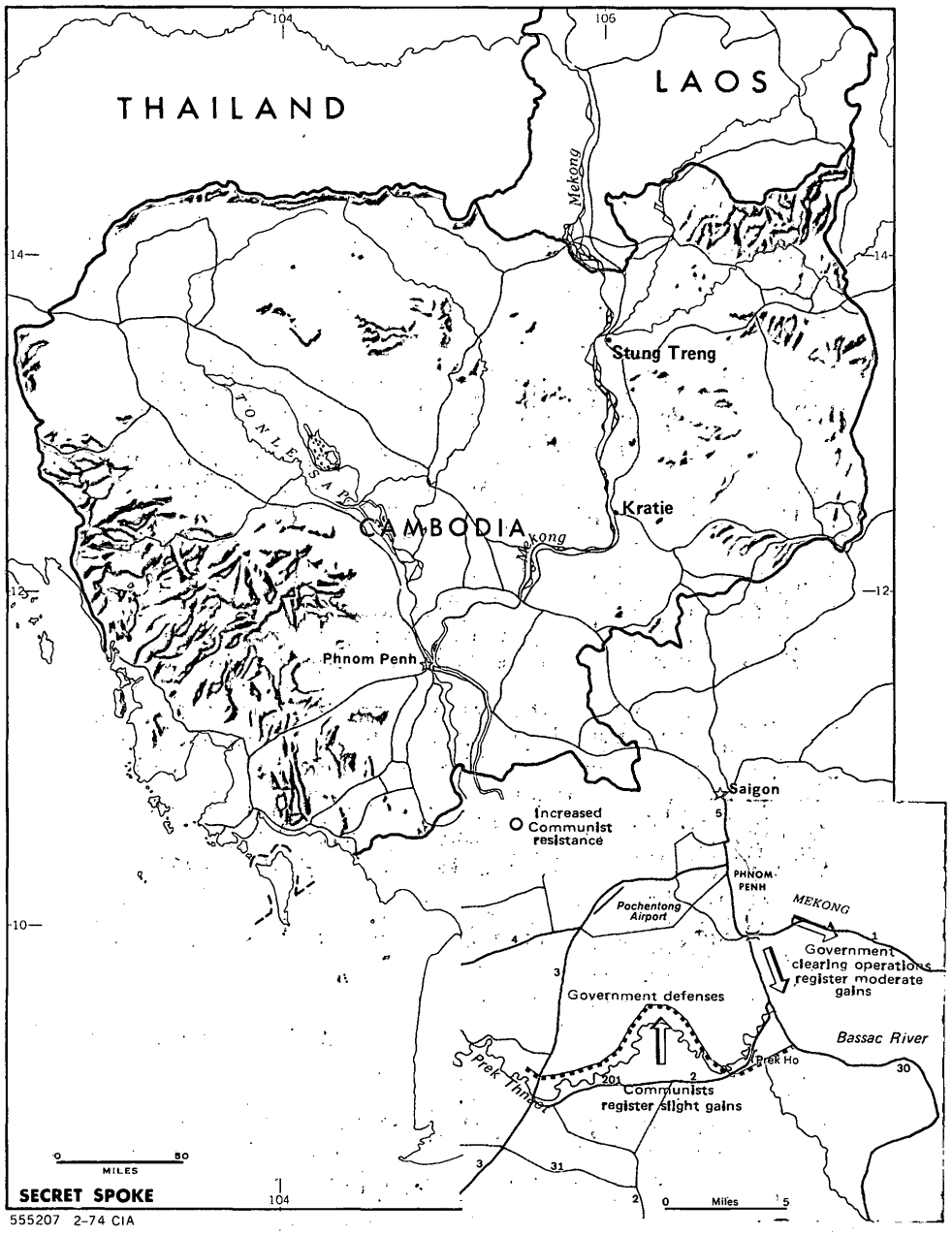

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CAMBODIA

Khmer Communist artillery units have not shelled Phnom Penh in the past two days, although ground action around the capital has increased slightly. Communist attacks along the city's southern defenses have forced some withdrawals by Cambodian Army units from positions along the north bank of the Prek Thnaot River. Northwest of Pochentong Airport, government forces are on the attack but are meeting increasingly stiff resistance. Elsewhere, Cambodian Army units have made modest gains in clearing operations along Route 1 and the Bassac River southeast of Phnom Penh.

An intercept of February 1 indicates that a meeting of the standing committee of the Khmer Communist Party is being called for February 5 or 6 at an undisclosed location. The meeting is to assess the current tactical situation around Phnom Penh in order to "encourage a movement to attack and penetrate Phnom Penh immediately by jointly organizing and further expanding our forces to the maximum extent possible." Given the insurgents' command and control difficulties on the several tactical fronts surrounding Phnom Penh, however, their ability to mount a major coordinated offensive against the capital remains questionable.

A message of January 29 shows that the Khmer Communists are continuing to receive and allocate military equipment and vehicles recently given to them by Hanoi. The message notes that the transfer of equipment for insurgent forces in the western and southwestern regions of the country and in the Phnom Penh area is almost complete. 25X1

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USSR

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USSR-FRANCE

Foreign Minister Gromyko is reportedly planning a trip to Paris in mid-February to lay the groundwork for one by President Pompidou to the USSR. Gromyko presumably will try to flatten the bumps so that Pompidou's visit can proceed smoothly.

The Soviets are already dropping hints in Paris that they hope the French will forgo complaints about an alleged Soviet-US "condominium" and about Moscow's failure to consult with Paris during the Middle East war in October. Public airing of such grievances late last year, together with fresh Soviet misgivings about possible changes in France's attitude toward West European defense cooperation, brought unusually high strain in relations between the two countries.

The Pompidou visit has been in the works for several months. In view of the frictions late last year, however, the Soviets have been dragging their feet. It now appears he will travel to the USSR not long after Gromyko's consultations in Paris.

25X1

25X1

The French have been bitterly critical of what they consider Moscow's cavalier attitude toward the protocol on consultations, which the two countries signed in 1970.

During Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kovalev's visit to Paris last month, the French passed on specific suggestions about how to improve bilateral consultations. These may now be included in a Soviet proposal to be negotiated by Gromyko for signing at the summit. It is possible that Paris is seeking an accord similar to the US-Soviet agreement to consult bilaterally on situations that could lead to nuclear war. The Soviets, for their part, have been encouraging other countries to conclude agreements of this kind.

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JORDAN

Mutinous elements of the elite 40th Armored Brigade, stationed about 15 miles north of Amman, quickly returned to their barracks yesterday, but they are still threatening to march on Amman if their demands are not met.

The move is apparently not directed against King Husayn, who is in London. It is, however, clearly intended to force him to remedy a number of long-standing grievances, particularly among the lower ranks of the army. The mutineers--primarily drivers and perhaps some junior officers--are demanding higher pay and lower commodity prices. In addition, they are asking for the dismissal of the [redacted] unpopular chief of staff, Sharif Zayd bin Shakir, and the return of the King's uncle, Sharif Nasir, as army commander. They may also be demanding the resignation of the government of Prime Minister Zayd Rifai, which they blame for the high cost of living. 25X1

Acting in the King's absence, Crown Prince Hassan and armed forces chief Majali succeeded at least temporarily in calming the mutineers and made the rounds of other army units yesterday to try to keep the mutiny from spreading. Hassan is known to be close to Sharif Nasir and is sympathetic to the mutineers' demands. He will almost certainly press Husayn to meet the 40th Brigade's demands as soon as the King returns.

No senior officers were involved in the mutiny or are likely to try to take advantage of the present undercurrent of disgruntlement. Civilian leaders in Amman reportedly are calm [redacted] If Husayn moves promptly to mollify the mutineers, as he probably will, the trouble is unlikely to spread. But if, once he returns to Amman, he procrastinates or responds with half-measures, more serious incidents could flare up. 25X1

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EGYPT

President Sadat's dismissal over the weekend of Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal as managing editor and chairman of the board of Al-Ahram, while naming him presidential press adviser, probably is designed to muzzle the increasingly obstreperous journalist. Although frequently assumed to be a spokesman for Sadat, Haykal has in fact been his own man since the death of his patron, President Nasir. Since the cease-fire of October 1973, Haykal has consistently shown a pessimism about peace settlement prospects and a skepticism about US intentions that run counter to Sadat's own position and actions.

On February 1, Haykal devoted his weekly article to an attack on US aims in the Middle East. His statement that US policy has not altered appeared to be a direct slap at Sadat's repeated public assertions that it has indeed changed and should be reciprocated by gestures from the Arabs.

There is some question whether Haykal will accept his new appointment. Sadat may also come in for some criticism from the intellectual establishment at Al-Ahram for appointing Deputy Prime Minister Hatim as board chairman; Hatim, who is also information minister, was involved a year ago in the removal from the newspaper of several leftist writers and, despite their later reinstatement, he is not a popular figure in press circles.

On the other hand, Ali Amin, who will take Haykal's position as managing editor, is highly respected among the press. Sadat may hope to mollify his opponents in Al-Ahram with this appointment while, at the same time, signaling through Hatim's appointment that open opposition to government policies will not be countenanced.

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NOTES

Venezuela: Caracas has announced that it will give Central American countries, which have been affected by the Arab oil cutback, preferential treatment in oil supplies but not in prices. The supplies apparently will come from royalties paid in crude to the government by foreign oil companies.

25X1

USSR:

25X1

25X1

USSR-Cuba: General Secretary Brezhnev returned to Moscow this morning after a one-week visit to Cuba. A joint declaration on the visit was signed Saturday but has not yet been issued. The only agreements announced so far provide for Soviet assistance to Cuban aviation and for help to Cuba in finding new petroleum resources.

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